

Acquisition Reform Success Story



Airborne Laser (ABL) Program

Program Manager (PM): Col Michael W. Booen
Program Executive Officer: Mr Harry E Schulte
Contractor: Boeing/TRW/Lockheed-Martin
Contractor PM: Mr Paul Shennum (Boeing)
Success Story POC: Mary Jackson, SMC/TMC,
DSN 246-2928

Program Description

The ABL is an ACAT ID Program to develop and field an airborne laser weapon system for lethal defense against Theater Ballistic Missiles during their boost phase. The Program Definition and Risk Reduction contract includes the design, fabrication, integration, and test of a high energy laser weapon system on a modified Boeing 747-400F aircraft, culminating in the destruction of a boosting missile in 2002.

How Streamlining Makes a Difference

The 50 person ABL Program Office has embraced acquisition reform from the outset. In the Concept Design (CD) phase, numerous initiatives were implemented to substantially reduce and manage program costs. Integrated Product Teams were formed with both competitors, and the ABL performance specification was captured in a Technical Requirements Document. Both competitors developed individual design solutions based upon the Government's top level requirements. The acquisition process for the PDRR phase was built upon lessons learned from the CD Phase, e.g. the offeror's Concept Design data was used in lieu of a technical proposal, and the Integrated Master Plan and Contractor Statement of Work were merged into a single event driven Integrated Task and Management Plan. A performance-based contracting approach was used, including a Statement of Objectives, minimum data requirements, and electronic submittal of data. In addition, the program made a conscious investment up front to buy, as the PDRR aircraft, the airframe (747-400F) ultimately required for operational use. The PDRR contract leverages best commercial aircraft practices, the re-use of previously proven software code, utilization of COTS/GOTS software, the use of COTS/NDI hardware, and utilization of Cost As an Independent Variable to perform trade studies. In addition, Contractor Logistics Support will be extensively used on the ABL program. The PDRR contract is structured to incorporate many of the traditional early-EMD activities. This approach allows execution of a Critical Design Review before EMD, enables entry into EMD with a firm production baseline, and ultimately shortens EMD.

MEASURE

PDRR RFP:

Open dialogue with contractor teams during development of RFP	3 drafts, then final
Contract Data Requirements (CDRLs)	11
Mil Stds Required	0
Statement of Objectives	2 pages

Bottom Line: Procuring PDRR aircraft which can be retrofitted to production configuration/re-using proven software (doing it **cheaper**). Performing portions of EMD activities during PDRR (doing it **faster**). Employing best commercial practices and proven hardware components where it makes sense (doing it **better**).